The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Fuel Rationing Reported Prior to APEC Summit

By The Moscow Times

August 20, 2012

Russia has spent billions of dollars building bridges, hotels and other infrastructure for the APEC summit in Vladivostok.

VLADIVOSTOK — State security services have told retailers in this Far Eastern city, where President Vladimir Putin will host an Asia-Pacific economic summit next month, to ration gas during the event, sources who saw the notification said.

Security services sent out a letter to everyone who owns a gas station informing them of a limit of five liters of gasoline for each vehicle per day for nearly a week, a source in Vladivostok who had a copy of the letter told Reuters.

"We notify you that during the period between Sept. 6 and Sept. 11 restrictions are being introduced for commercial sales of fuel in the amount of 5 liters per car a day," the source quoted the letter as saying.

The coastal city of 600,000 is to host the annual Asia -Pacific Economic Cooperation, or APEC, summit next month, to be attended by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and heads of state or senior officials from the 21-nation group.

Russia has spent billions of dollars building bridges, hotels and other infrastructure for a summit that will signal strong Russian interest in Asia , which Moscow hopes can help fuel growth in its sparsely populated eastern regions.

The source said the order appeared to be intended to keep the streets clear of traffic, a goal reminiscent of efforts by the Soviet authorities who evicted suspected prostitutes and homeless people from Moscow for the 1980 Olympic Games.

Russian fuel producers are regularly subject to directives and recommendations over supply and pricing. When world market prices were soaring, they came under pressure to cap prices during campaigns for a December parliamentary election and a March presidential vote Putin won.

A source at a Vladivostok law enforcement body said the authorities would authorize unlimited fuel sales only to police, ambulance services, city buses and fire brigades at the time of the summit.

"The secret services ordered fuel companies, under any pretext, to stop gasoline sales during the summit to prevent people from going out in cars and creating problems from the security and traffic jams point of view," the law enforcement source said.

The government is also concerned about gas supply, which has run short at times in recent years as demand has climbed. Maintenance shutdowns at refineries and exports led to a fuel crisis in the first half of last year.

Vladivostok's fuel market is supplied mostly by refineries operated by Alliance and state-controlled Rosneft.

Representatives of Rosneft and Alliance said the companies were not cutting back fuel sales because of the summit. Police and Federal Security Service officials in Vladivostok were not immediately available for comment.

Security agencies have beefed up their presence in the city and are boosting security measures, sources at the Federal Guard Service , the agency in charge of guarding Russian officials, said.

Some workers at state and private companies said they were offered vacations to leave town during the summit.

"The bosses have asked their employees to extend vacations for a week in early September," a worker for a local firm said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/08/20/fuel-rationing-reported-prior-to-apec-summit-a17140